

COVID-19 Third Sector Response Forum
Wednesday 16th March 2022
3pm – 5pm
Zoom Meeting

Present:

Lynsey Hansford (LH) (Chairperson)
 Laura Jamieson (LJ) (Minute Taker)

CVS Falkirk and District
 CVS Falkirk and District

Alan Grey (AlG)
 Ania Sandland (ASa)
 Chris Gunn (CG)
 Dawna Chisholm (DC)
 Donald Johnston (DJ)
 Donna Laidlaw (DL)
 Derek Allison (DA)
 Iain Savage (IS)
 Jessie-Anne Malcolm (JM)
 Julie Ryan (JR)
 Lindsay Daniels (LD)
 Martin Allen (MA)
 Steve McQueen (SMc)
 Steven Litts (StL)
 Susan Docherty (SD)

Forth Valley Migrant Support Network
 Outside the Box and Central Wellbeing SCIO
 Falkirk Foundation
 Falkirk Council
 Scottish Fire and Rescue Service
 Strathcarron Hospice
 Falkirk Foundation
 dates-n-mates Falkirk
 NHS Forth Valley
 Forth Environment Link
 dates-n-mates Falkirk
 Forth Valley Sensory Centre
 Sustainable Thinking Scotland CIC
 Cyrenians
 Falkirk and Clackmannanshire Carers Centre

1. Welcome and Introductions

LH introduced herself, welcomed forum members present and advised the meeting was recorded via Zoom. Introductions were made via the Zoom chat function.

2. Review of Previous Minutes (Wednesday 16/2/2022)

The minutes were approved as an accurate record of the previous meeting, with the following updates:

- 5.3: People's Postcode Lottery New Programme and Criteria: at the time of the meeting, the fund is closed to new applications, and will [reopen on Friday 1st April](#).

3. Falkirk Council Housing, Dawna Chisholm

LH introduced DC from Falkirk Council's housing department. DC works on engagement, but has passed LH the relevant contact for the forum's queries around allocation, and has resources she can share with the forum.

LH and DC both expressed their hope that this meeting could provide a rounded view of housing and housing allocation in Falkirk, and open the channels of communications between the sector and the housing department, while developing a working knowledge of how each other operates.



Falkirk's Council's housing remit is steered by their housing strategy, which was developed with input from their tenants. There are currently 13 Tenants and Residents Organisations (TROs) across the Falkirk Council area (DC can provide contact details if required), and a number of core groups the department works with on engagement, including:

- Editorial – responsible for the Tenant Talk magazine, which goes out to 17,000 Falkirk Council tenants; DC encouraged members to reach out to promote their activities within
- Tenants Forum – open to the public, with the agenda directed by its members, and currently looking at matters including how tenants' rent is spent
- Scrutiny Panel – similar to the Tenants Forum, but with partnership working involved; currently looking at how other parts of Falkirk Council impact engagement and satisfaction
- Consultation Register – consisting of over 5,000 tenants, who are sent ad hoc consultation work around targeted areas.

DC noted that tenants' voices are key, but that the department also works closely with their partners to ensure the best experience for their tenants. They are also working to improve communications around repairs, along with creating a digital strategy – part of this involves piloting work to tackle isolation and get tenants online.

DC then took questions from members on a number of queries for people they are supporting; she also noted that her colleagues working in allocation are very keen to get involved with the members to resolve any questions around allocation.

Action: LH to share resources and DC's email address with forum members.

4. Opportunities

4.1 Spending Review

LH informed members that Alan Christie and Dawna Chisholm from Falkirk Council's Housing team will be attending the March meeting to speak with and hear from members.

They will not be able to answer every question in the time available, but they are keen to hear from the sector. LH encouraged members to look at this as an opportunity to open lines of communication on housing, in order to work together to support people. It is also an opportunity to inform the Housing team of the issues they have encountered, while learning how to refer people to the Housing team.

Members thanked LH for arranging this opportunity, and asked if it would be worth sending her their questions in advance. LH confirmed this, and noted they should include anything they believe Alan should know about.

Scottish Government has launched a consultation on their Resource Spending Review, and is keen to hear from the third sector.

Their intention is to publish multi-year spending plans in May 2022 to provide stakeholders, delivery partners, organisations and individuals across Scotland with more certainty on which to base their own forward planning. The Resource Spending Review will build on the Capital Spending Review

published last year. Together, Scottish Government aims for these 2 spending reviews to give a comprehensive picture of Scotland's public spending multi-year plans.

Additionally, last December, Scottish Government published its [Resource Spending Review Framework](#), which sets the scene for the development of these spending plans.

LH highlighted to members that the consultation documents are quite large, but revolve around 6 key questions, which she briefly outlined.

The deadline for responses is Sunday 27th March.

To submit your response, please visit the [Scottish Government consultation site](#).

4.2 Off the Bench

DA spoke about Falkirk Foundation's participation in Off the Bench, which is a Scottish Professional Football League (SPFL) Trust 10 – 12 week, one-day-per-week programme, for young people looking to take their next positive step. Young people educational SQA qualifications, plus Scottish FA coaching qualifications and input from other partners. The aim is to give young people options, and make them aware of the options available to them regarding future pathways to development and growing themselves.

The second cohort is due to start in May, with 18 young people currently signed up and a small number of spaces still available (up to 25). The programme is free, and open to young people of any gender. Uniforms and lunches will be provided.

DA noted that a number of participants from the first cohort have gone on to further education or gainful employment as a result, and other members are welcome to get involved as partners.

4.3 Chance to Flourish

LH informed members of the [Chance to Flourish](#) funding, which aims to help third sector groups and organisations provide practical support (including food, clothing and shelter) to children, young people and families to help alleviate poverty, social exclusion, deprivation, disability or illness.

The fund is community-led and -based, with the deadline for applications on Monday 21st March.

For further information, please visit the [Chance to Flourish](#) website.

4.4 Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund

The Social Isolation and Loneliness Fund 2022 is managed by Impact Funding Partners on behalf of an anonymous donor, with roughly £30,000 available, and organisations across Scotland (with an annual income not exceeding £150,000) can apply for a micro-grant of up to £1,000 to enable them to tackle social isolation, loneliness or reduced wellbeing.

The funding will be available to small, local organisations to enable them to support people, aged 16 years old and over, who may be at risk of social isolation, loneliness or reduced wellbeing.

Eligible activities must take place Sunday 1st May – Friday 30th September 2022. The activities funded must be in addition to what organisations and groups are already delivering, enabling them to reach and support more individuals at risk over this period.

The deadline for applications is Friday 18th March.

For further information, including how to apply, please visit the [CVS Falkirk](https://www.cvsfalkirk.org.uk) website.

4.5 Ukraine

LH and LJ highlighted current opportunities for members, their groups and communities to help support efforts for Ukraine and its people, which CVS Falkirk will continue to share to its social media channels and website, and will update members as much as possible.

LH also informed members of the [OSCR guidance documents](#) for donors and the third sector, along with resources for families in speaking about the war with their children.

Members asked about the current resettlement process, and highlighted that it would be good to know if refugees would be coming into the Falkirk and Forth Valley areas. LH spoke about the cross-sector working group CVS Falkirk is involved with, which includes Falkirk Council, and is focused on needs, actions and solutions.

AG advised that the resettlement process is often fast-paced and constantly changing, especially with an ongoing situation like the war in Ukraine, and that people working with Ukrainian refugees should not be put off by possible language barriers; instead, he advised members to listen carefully to refugees, and noted that many will speak Russian due to the history of the two countries, and there are already many Russian speakers in the Falkirk area (from multiple backgrounds).

5. Members' Updates

LH invited members for updates on their own work, and any points they wanted to raise or issues they had encountered. This resulted in offers of support and collaboration amongst members; actions are noted below.

Action: AS to send DL information on their support groups MC to send LH volunteer recruitment details.

Date of Next Meeting: tbc, via Zoom
LH will contact members in due course.